

ENTERED

October 20, 2017

David J. Bradley, Clerk

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
CORPUS CHRISTI DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	§	
	§	
VS.	§	CRIMINAL ACTION NO. 2:17-CR-329
	§	
RENE PAREDES JR, <i>et al</i> ,	§	
	§	
Defendants.	§	

ORDER DENYING MOTION TO RELEASE MATERIAL WITNESSES


This is an alien smuggling case involving two defendants. The defendants were arrested on May 16, 2017 at the United States Border Patrol Checkpoint south of Falfurrias, Texas, when agents found four undocumented aliens in the sleeper compartment of the tractor trailer driven by defendant Rene Paredes, Jr. The four undocumented aliens from the May 16, 2017 incident are being detained as material witnesses. The material witnesses from the May 16, 2017 incident are: (1) Sonia Sarai Rivas-Mejia; (2) Jose Pablo Zavala-Ramirez; (3) Edelio Neftali Tojil-Lopez; and (4) Julio Cesar Zepeda-Blanco. These persons are citizens of El Salvador and Guatemala who do not have status to remain in the United States.

Defendant Royce Paredes is the son of the co-defendant. Royce Paredes was a passenger in the tractor trailer driven by his father. Royce Paredes has entered a plea of guilty. Defendant Rene Paredes, Jr. was recently arrested on a pretrial violation for another alleged incident of transporting undocumented aliens. Today, defendant Rene Paredes, Jr. appeared for arraignment on a superseding indictment which alleges

additional counts of transporting undocumented aliens which allegedly occurred while he was released on bond. Additional material witnesses have been ordered detained based on the subsequent alien smuggling activity of defendant Rene Paredes, Jr. Rene Paredes Jr. is now set for trial on the original and additional counts on December 11, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

The depositions of the original material witnesses were taken October 12, 2017. Counsel for these material witnesses has filed a motion for their release. (D.E. 76). Counsel for the Government and defendant Rene Paredes, Jr. are opposed to the material witnesses being released. The undersigned has considered the motion and the arguments of counsel and for the reasons set forth on the record, the motion is **DENIED**. Counsel for the material witnesses may move the court to re-open the detention hearing. Counsel for the material witnesses and the Government should be prepared to discuss the immigration and criminal history of each of the material witnesses if their detention hearings are re-opened.

ORDERED this 19th day of October, 2017.


Jason B. Libby
United States Magistrate Judge